Was Your Dog Sprayed by a Skunk? What You Need to Know

PURINA PETCENTRIC

By Sallianne Norelli

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When your dog is sprayed by a skunk, it's more than just an offensive smell you need to think about. Knowledge is power if your dog suddenly reeks of that unmistakably pungent skunk odor.

A Visit to your Veterinarian?

First, assess the situation. Wear gloves and check your dog all over for bites and scratches. A skunk's spray is not his only line of defense, and skunks have been known to carry rabies. If you find any spots where the skin is broken, take your dog to your veterinarian immediately.

If your dog is pawing at his eyes or has teary, runny eyes after the incident, flush his eyes immediately with plain water and then take him to your veterinarian. He may have been sprayed in the face. You want a qualified professional to assess whether your dog has been sprayed in the eyes and needs immediate care.

Head to the Pet Aisle

Today, there are many excellent shampoos specially formulated for skunk scent removal on dogs. Your veterinarian can recommend one. If you're running out to the store and have to leave your dog at home while he's stinky, don't leave him inside alone. Contain him in his crate or safely contain him outdoors where he can await his bath.

Skunk smell is very difficult to get out of bedding, sofas, etc. — so, it's best that he not lay on anything like his dog bed until he's clean.

What About Natural Remedies?

You may have heard many a tale about washing a dog in tomato juice or various other household ingredients. The truth is that skunks emit sulfur-based chemicals called thiols that are extremely hard to break down. Even with the best of remedies, it is difficult to quickly and fully remove the stench.

You may find that you have to wash your dog several times to get all of it out. It's best to get a quality shampoo designed to rid your dog of skunk.

Act Fast

You may have a hard time bearing the smell of a sprayed dog — and your dog probably won't be happy about it either — so the quicker you take care of the situation, the better. The longer you let it sit, the harder it's going to be to remove. If you have outside access to a hose and the temperature is favorable, wash your dog outside. You may want to enlist help to hold your dog.

Wearing rubber gloves, scrub the shampoo into his fur with your hands. Let the shampoo sit for a few minutes to really penetrate your dog's fur. Rinse and dry your dog. Your nose may be overtaxed by the stench, so it may be hard to tell if all of it is gone. A washing later in the day might be in order, as well.

Think Ahead

If you and your dog spend a lot of time outside hiking or camping for extended vacations, keep your dog close, particularly at night, when skunks tend to roam the woods. Both at home and on vacation, keep your garbage sealed away, so you don't attract any skunks. Bring a bottle of shampoo and the number of a local vet, in case your dog is sprayed by a skunk during your excursion.

With a little know-how, you and your dog will come out of a skunk attack much wiser — and smelling better.

About the Author: Sallianne Norelli

Sallianne Norelli, a freelance writer and children's book artist, is the mom of one son

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Celebrate National Walk Your Dog Week in October

By Sallianne Norelli

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Every year, during the first week of October, dog owners across America take to the streets for National Walk Your Dog Week, a great opportunity to get out and enjoy fresh air with your favorite canine. Founded in 2010 by pet lifestyle expert and animal behaviorist Colleen Paige, the event was designed to get owners and their dogs up and out of the house.

The big goal is to walk regularly (not just for the first week of October), and there are a number of healthy reasons to do so.

A Bounty of Benefits

Paige attributes many behavioral issues in dogs to a lack of exercise. She believes that if dogs got more regular exercise, even just 20 minutes a day, three times a week, they'd be less apt to get into mischief. Other benefits of National Walk Your Dog Week include an increased awareness of pet obesity. Even a few extra pounds on a dog's frame can cause health issues.

The event hopes to get both owners and their four-legged companions moving. Paige attributes an increase in exercise with an overall feeling of well-being and a decrease in obesity-related health concerns for both humans and dogs.

Celebrating the Joy Together

The Animal Miracle Foundation, which sponsors National Walk Your Dog Week, hopes to encourage groups of dog walkers to plan their own community activities. Any group can form a team and head to trails in their area, host a pet parade in town, or even visit a senior living complex and volunteer to walk seniors' dogs. Groups can seek sponsors for their walks and donate the proceeds to shelters or even local businesses.

When walking, keep in mind that pace and distance are not what matters. The important thing is that everyone's legs are moving. Be sure to do a pet care check-up with your veterinarian to make sure your dog is healthy enough to exercise. Then get out there and walk!

As The Animal Miracle Foundation reminds us, "A tired dog is a good dog."

About the Author: Sallianne Norelli

Sallianne Norelli is a freelance writer and children's book illustrator who's mom to a 12 year old and two rescued dogs — Sabrina, a Chiweenie, and Maddie, a Finnish Spitz.

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